Oxytropis borealis DC. var. ***viscida*** (Nutt.) Welsh

sticky crazyweed

Fabaceae (Pea Family)

Status: State Sensitive
Rank: G5T4?S1S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961): This viscid (slimy-glandular) perennial grows in dense tufts and has a branched persistent woody base**.** It is nearly stemless, or the stem is so short that the leaves appear to be basal. The greenish leaves have both hairs and wart-like glands, and are viscid- more or less throughout. The pinnately compound leaves are 1-1/8 to 8 in. (3-20 cm) long (the leaves closest to the base are shorter than the rest). The 15-45 leaflets are linear-lanceolate to narrowly oblong, ¼ to 1 in. (5-25 mm) long, and not whorled. There are membranous leaf like appendages (stipules) at the base of the leaf stalk that are ¼ to ½ in. (6-12 mm) long and fused to the leaf stalk for over half their length. The racemes are ¾ to 2¾ in. (2-7 cm) long, spike-like, mostly bearing 7-30 pea-like flowers, and elongating in fruit. The leafless flower stalks usually slightly exceed the leaves in length. The cream-colored to reddish-purple flowers are ½ to 2/3 in. (10-15 mm) long. The calyx is about 2/3 as long as the corolla, with grayish to blackish hairs and linear teeth that are and more or less ½ as long as the tube. The seedpods are ½ to 2/3 in. (10-15 mm) long including the distinct beak, 1/8 to ¼ in. (4-6 mm) broad, and covered with grayish to blackish hairs.

Identification Tips: This *Oxytropis* is unique in that it is viscid throughout, especially on the calyx. In the Olympic Mountains it has been known to cross with *O. campestris*.

Phenology: The taxon flowers June through August.

Range: This taxon is distributed widely but discontinuously from Alaska to Quebec, southward to Colorado, California, Oregon, and the Olympic Mountains of Washington, and east in Minnesota. In the Olympic Mountains it is restricted to Clallam County.

Habitat: This taxon is found in alpine or subalpine semi-consolidated scree and scree meadows, and occasionally in rock crevices from 4750 to 6600 feet (1450-2014 meters) elevation. Associated species at one or more sites include yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), orange agoseris (*Agoseris aurantiaca*), Olympic onion (*Allium crenulatum*), pussytoes (*Antennaria* sp.), rockcress (*Arabis* sp.), broadleaf white

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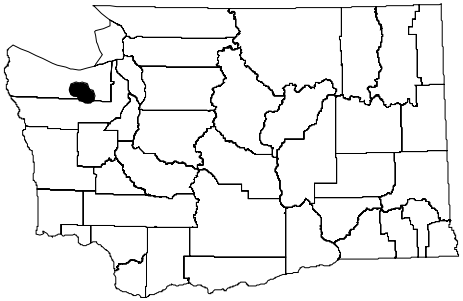
Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish

Known distribution of *Oxytropis borealis* var. *viscida* in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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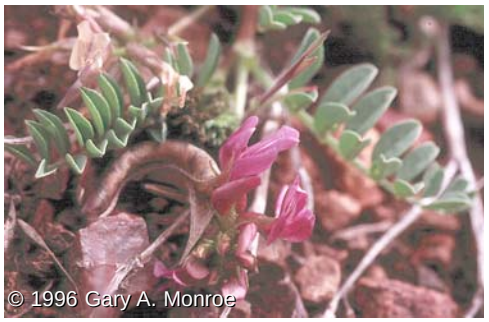
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sagebrush (*Artemisia ludoviciana* var. *latiloba*), blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), Clearwater cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*), common woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), Cascade desert parsley (*Lomatium martindalei* var. *flavum*), silky phacelia (*Phacelia sericea*), Pacific stonecrop (*Sedum divergens*), and hookedspur violet (*Viola adunca* var. *adunca*).

Ecology: The taxon is found on south-west facing ridgetops where snow is removed early due to wind and sun exposure. Populations in Washington were found on a variety of rocks substrates including slate, phyllite, sandstone, limestone, calcite and basalt. The only consistently present rock is limestone and/or calcite (Buckingham 1981).

State Status Comments: There are fewer than five documented occurrences of this endemic taxon in the Olympic Mountains.

Inventory Needs: Known sites should be revisited in late summer when seedpods have developed in order to monitor insect damage.

Threats and Management Concerns: Threats include insect infestation of seedpods, and trampling from hikers, goats, deer, rabbit and bears. Insect damage may leave plants more susceptible to impact from people or natural causes.

Comments: Hitchcock et al. (1961) refer to this species as *Oxytropis viscida* Nutt.

References:

Buckingham, 1981. *Oxytropis viscida* general summary. Unpublished. On file with WNHP.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest* Part 3: *Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae.* University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 614 pp.

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